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A survey, known as Project Talent, is to be a series of examinations administered to 500,000 students in 1000 sample schools. It aims at measuring the student's present knowledge and his potential aptitudes and abilities. The results of this 1960 census will be scored, analyzed, and evaluated by special electronic equipment. The project is being financed by the U. S. Office of Education and under the joint administration of the University of Pittsburgh and the Office of Education. Four panels of the nation's leading specialists in guidance and counseling, educational research, testing problems, and manpower and sociology will work with an advisory council, which in turn will work through regional directors of local superintendents, who will administer the examinations. Project Talent will use only tested types of instruments. The project aims to acquire an inventory of human resources, provide a set of standards for educational and psychological measurement, provide a counseling guide, and provide a better understanding of career choices. A followup study will seek to establish a better understanding of the educational experiences which prepare students for their life work.

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UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
Project TALENT Office
6135 Kansas Avenue
Washington 11, D. C.

ED002177

A National Inventory of Aptitudes and Abilities

A survey through the University of Pittsburgh, supported by the United States Office of Education, with assistance from the National Institute of Mental Health and the Office of Naval Research

Bulletin No. 1 **November 1959**

THE STORY OF PROJECT TALENT

Our Country Needs the Full Use Of All Its Talents— This Aptitude and Ability Census Will Tell Us What Is Available

Our country's continued growth and development require the identification, development, and utilization of all available talents. We cannot use all of these talents unless we know what is available. A national inventory of aptitudes and abilities will enable school personnel to assist their students in developing and making the most of their potential.

If we are to plan properly for meeting the increased needs for advanced education—if we are to know, for example, how many educators or physicians we may expect to educate and train in the years ahead—we need a better idea of how many of our young people have the aptitudes, the inclination, and the education for entrance into various careers. Everyone has his own special talents. But how many persons fail to receive proper encouragement and education?

There are many tests in standard subjects, and for some years it has been possible to test one person or a thousand persons for general intelligence, musical ability, or capability in languages. "Project Talent" may be an historic enterprise, for it is *the first scientifically planned national inventory of human talents: the aptitudes and abilities of a people.*

1960 Is a Census Year Project Talent Is a Scientific Census

This inventory will be conducted in March of 1960, in order to coincide with the 1960 population census. When the census taker comes to the door of a home, the householder does not feel the census is an examination which is to be passed or failed. The same is true of "Project Talent." No special preparation is necessary for this examination. Other sets of tests search for certain abilities or superiority in selected subjects. "Project Talent" will report fully the unique potential and all the talents of all students tested.

A scientifically selected sample of half a million high school students will be given a two-day series of examinations. These tests will measure many different kinds of things. "Project Talent" will be carried out through local school systems all over the nation—in the country and the city, and in public, private, and parochial schools.

The scores from the tests will be made available to the individual school, to be used as the school wishes, but "Project Talent" will not evaluate specific schools, nor compare one student with another. The tests will be available only to those schools selected as a part of this scientific study. The tests are not intended as substitutes for present testing programs; they are special instruments scientifically designed for this particular purpose.

This project covers more than school activities; follow-up studies are planned. The project will seek to determine what these people are doing in their jobs or in higher education one year after graduation from high school. The first survey and later questionnaires also will ask about their interests or hobbies. A young person may have a hobby which involves a special talent in photography or music, for example, but that interest may not be revealed in ordinary school work.

These examinations will be designed to measure potential aptitudes and abilities of a more general sort in addition to measuring what the student knows.

Most teachers are interested not merely in school grades, but in the student's potential, and what he eventually does. When "Project Talent" is completed school teachers will have much more definite information about the kinds of talents and potential they may reasonably expect to find in their classrooms. Educators will have realistic answers to some of their questions about how to guide and develop these talents.

Progress in Educational Research, Test Development, and New Computers Makes Possible This National Inventory

This national inventory of human resources has long been needed for planning in education. The scientifically selected cross section of American youth to be tested is large enough that the findings will give educators important facts about the total student population. The goals outlined below indicate some of the ways this basic information may be used.

Educators have long known that a collection of smaller studies cannot be as definitive as a national study. There are several new factors which now make such a survey possible:

- Fundamental tests of aptitudes and abilities have been developed.

- New electronic scoring machines, coupled with high-speed electronic computers, make it possible to process thousands of test items in a small fraction of the time required in the past. Each of the 500,000 sets of student's answer sheets will contain about 2,000 items. These one billion bits of information will require 1,250 machine-hours for initial scoring, reporting to schools, and recording on magnetic tape for analysis and future follow-up studies. The analyses of these data on high-speed computers are expected to take less than 100 hours. This data processing would have required millions of man-hours of work as recently as five years ago.

- The principal factor in the initiation of this project, however, is that the nation has begun to appreciate the importance of assuring an educational system designed to offer proper training and opportunities to students having diverse aptitudes and developmental needs.

Thus, leading educational research institutions, agencies of the federal government, and representatives of professional, educational, and scientific associations have joined together to assist in guiding the study and interpreting the results from "Project Talent."

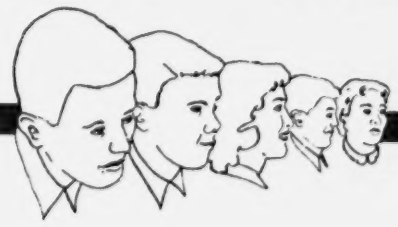
Financial Support Is Being Provided By the Office of Education With Assistance from Other Federal Agencies

"Project Talent" is financed for the most part by funds from the United States Office of Education through Commissioner of Education Lawrence G. Derthick. These funds came from the Cooperative Research Program, directed by Assistant Commissioner of Education Roy M. Hall. The plan for the project, as developed by the University of Pittsburgh and the American Institute for Research was reviewed and recommended for approval by the Advisory Committee of the Cooperative Research Program.

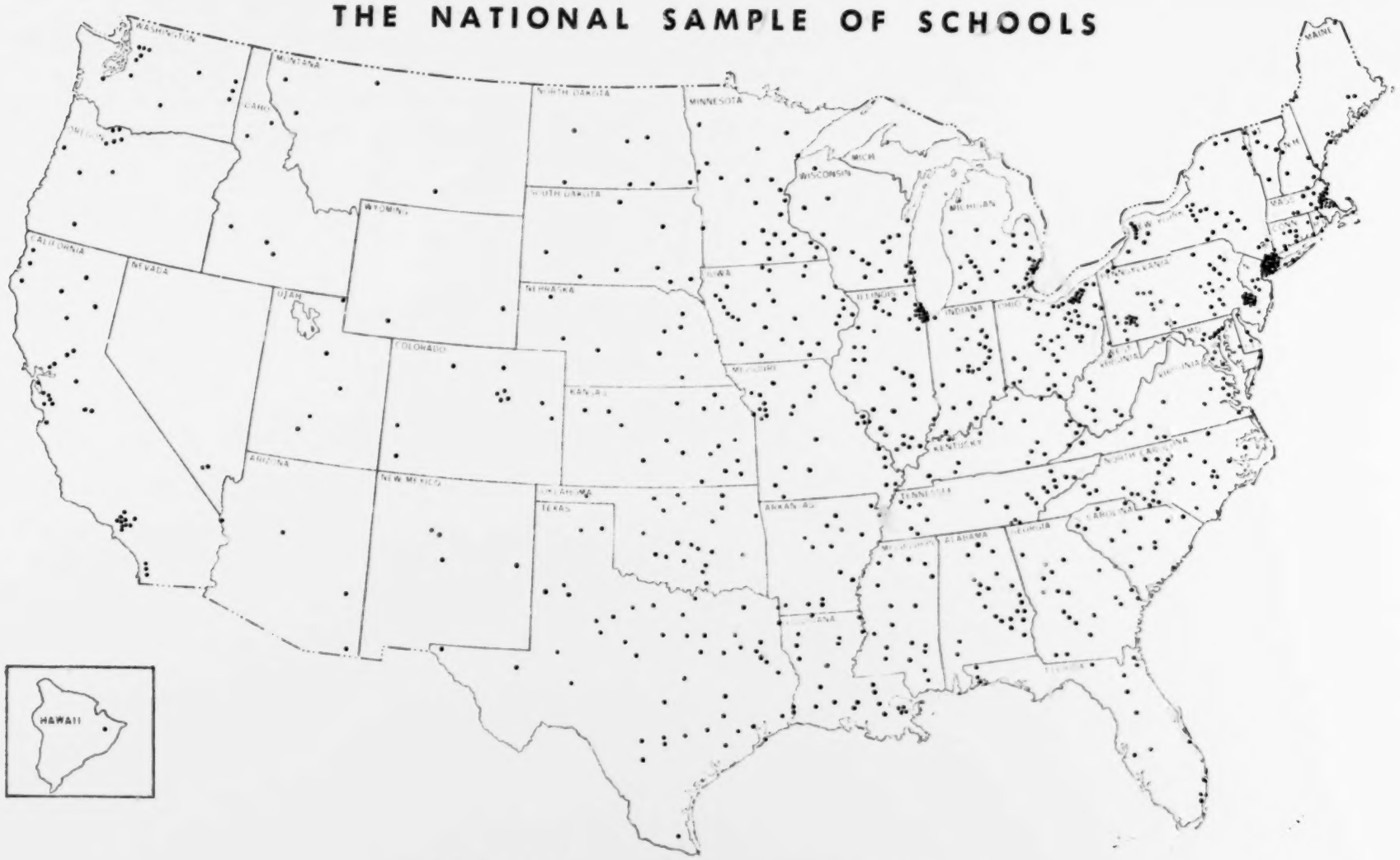
The Chairman of this Committee was Dr. Ralph W. Tyler, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Palo Alto, California. Other members of the Committee were: Dr. Finis E. Engleman, Executive Secretary, American Association of School Administrators; Dr. Chester W. Harris, Professor of Education, University of Wisconsin; Dr. Erick L. Lindman, Professor of School Administration, George Peabody College for Teachers; Dr. Henry J. Otto, Professor of Education, University of Texas; Dr. J. Cayce Morrison, Assistant Commissioner for Research, New York State Education Department (retired); Dr. H. H. Remmers, Director, Division of Educational Reference, Purdue University; Dr. Dewey B. Stuit, Dean, College of Liberal Arts, State University of Iowa; and Dr. Dorothy Adkins Wood, Chairman, Department of Psychology, University of North Carolina.

Support for the project is provided also by the National Institute of Mental Health and the Office of Naval Research, with aid in the planning stages from the National Science Foundation.

Dr. John C. Flanagan, Professor at the University of Pittsburgh and Director of the American Institute for Research, prepared the initial proposals for the study and is the responsible investigator.



THE NATIONAL SAMPLE OF SCHOOLS



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OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT TALENT

- **A scientifically planned NATIONAL INVENTORY of the talents of our youth.**
- **The SPECIFIC PATTERNS OF APTITUDES, ABILITIES, AND INTERESTS which provide the best basis for various college courses and careers.**
- **Follow-up studies to determine the EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES which will contribute to the development of these aptitudes and abilities.**
- **The GUIDANCE PROCEDURES most effective in assisting each student in selecting the career which will assure him the greatest personal satisfaction and success.**

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
With assistance from the
AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH

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100 REGIONAL COORDINATORS

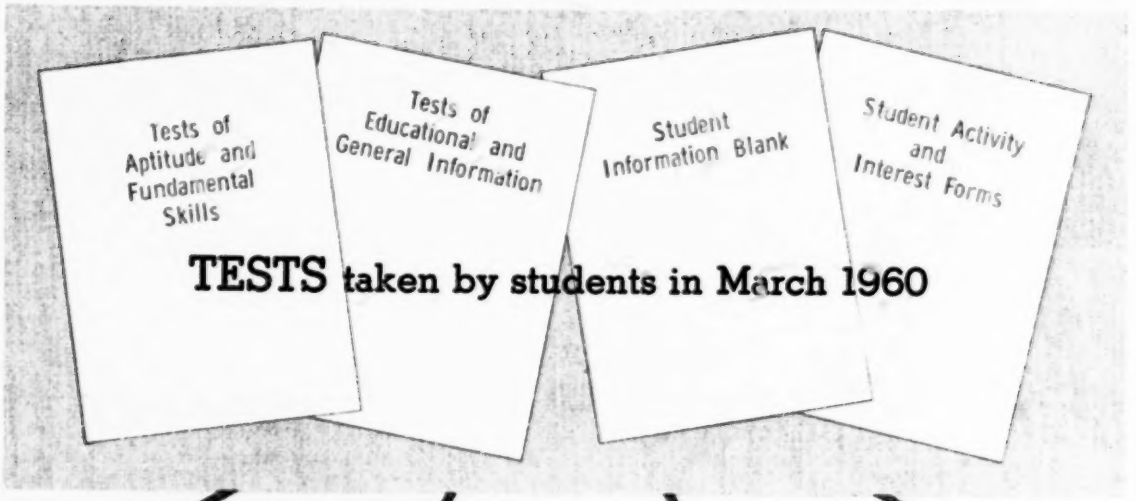
REGIONAL COORDINATOR
SUPERINTENDENTS

1000 SAMPLE SCHOOLS

REGIONAL COORDINATOR
SUPERINTENDENTS

500,000 STUDENTS

REGIONAL COORDINATOR
SUPERINTENDENTS

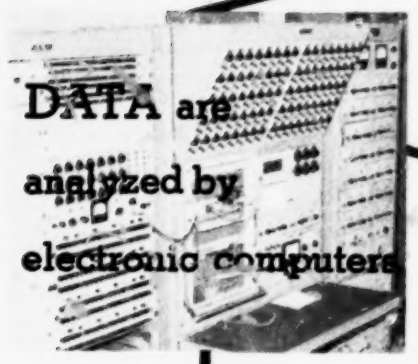

Tests of Aptitude and Fundamental Skills
Tests of Educational and General Information
Student Information Blank
Student Activity and Interest Forms

TESTS taken by students in March 1960

MEASUREMENT RESEARCH CENTER

TESTS are scored by

a Electronic Test Processing Equipment



DATA are analyzed by electronic computers

STUDENT'S DATA are stored for Follow-up Studies

SCORES are reported to Schools

REPORTS are prepared in consultation with Advisory Groups

REPORTS are made to the nation's schools and parents on the Identification, Development, and Utilization of Human Talents

The Planning and Administration Of Project Talent Is Under the Guidance Of National Committees and Coordinators

Four panels of the nation's leading specialists worked with the staff for more than a year planning the study. This staff included six full-time research workers headed by Dr. John T. Dailey. The over-all Chairman of the Advisory Panels during the planning phases was Dr. John H. Fischer, then Superintendent of the Baltimore Public Schools. The present Chairman is Dr. Kenneth E. Oberholtzer, Superintendent of the Denver Public Schools. The Chairman of the Guidance and Counseling Panel is Dr. Edward Landy, Director, Division of Counseling Services, Newton (Massachusetts) Public Schools. The Chairman of the Educational Research Panel is Dr. Robert J. Keller, Director, University High School, University of Minnesota. The Chairman of the Testing Problems Panel is Dr. Robert L. Thorndike, Head, Department of Psychological Foundations and Services, Teachers College, Columbia University. The Chairman of the Manpower and Sociology Panel is Dr. Samuel A. Stouffer, Director, Laboratory of Social Relations, Harvard University.

The plans developed through these groups were reviewed by an Advisory Council composed principally of Presidents and Executive Secretaries of the professional associations most interested in the findings from this study. These associations included the

American Association of School Administrators
National Association of Secondary School Principals
Council of Chief State School Officers
National Catholic Education Association
National School Boards Association
American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Personnel and Guidance Association
American Psychological Association

Regional Coordinators will administer the program locally. They will distribute tests, arrange for cooperation of schools, and serve as advisers on procedures. These local officials, familiar with the educational needs and resources of the local communities, will be the key representatives of one of the largest educational studies ever undertaken.

All results from the survey and the studies which follow will be published and will be freely available to educators and research specialists. Prior to publication, these studies will be reviewed by the panel of experts and the Advisory Council. Many educational and research groups have expressed keen interest in these studies and will be kept fully informed. A series of reports will be made to educational agencies throughout the country. These will go to school systems, to schools of education, to state departments of education, and to private educational associations as well as to the supporting agencies. Results will be of interest also to parents, to industry, to the military services, and to anyone concerned with planning for proper future use of manpower.

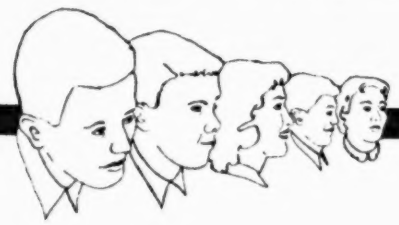
The responsibility for administering the tests and collecting the data about the students and their past experiences is placed directly in the hands of the selected schools. The scientific analysis of the original data and the collection of the follow-up data will be done under the direction of the program staff of the University of Pittsburgh with special assistance from the American Institute for Research.

The success of the survey phase depends upon the capability and effective assistance of local coordinators, principals, teachers, and others.

Project Talent Is a Scientific Study Using Only Tested Types of Instruments

It is expected that this historic national census and follow-up will give the nation a great many new facts. Some will be surprising. Also, it is to be expected that administration of such a large program will produce new methods and new ideas in the field of educational research itself. This should be one of several important by-products from the study.

"Project Talent" is not an experiment to try out new theories. All the major components of this project have been tested and proven in previous studies. Systematic measurement and description of students is essential to understanding and improvement. Educational leaders, teachers, colleges, school superintendents, and school boards will always be better able to apply educational theories when they have more facts. This is an attempt to carry out a detailed survey of human talents in a segment of the population with tested instruments.



Basic Goal: Information To Help American Youth To Develop Themselves and Their Nation

In this kind of scientific study, it is possible to know in advance some of the major types of information which will be produced.

Some of the important results of this National Aptitude and Ability Census will be:

• *An Inventory of Human Resources.* "Project Talent" will be a tremendous inventory or stocktaking in which we find out the capabilities of our youth.

We also plan to study the relationships between one kind of ability and another, between one type of school course and another, and between personal hobbies and the development of many types of competence.

• *A Set of Standards for Educational and Psychological Measurement.* When reliable measures have been obtained from thousands of persons in a systematically selected sample, it will be possible to provide a more accurate set of benchmarks or standards for test authors to use in standardizing tests so that scores indicate comparable levels of ability.

This may be roughly compared to the basic standards such as the marked bars for measuring length, or the standard weights which the National Bureau of Standards maintains.

• *A Comprehensive Counseling Guide Indicating the Patterns of Aptitude and Ability Which Are Predictive of Success in Various Careers.* In the follow-ups after the national examinations and analysis, students who took the tests will be located and asked to report on educational and vocational experiences. A young girl may have become a secretary, or a housewife, or she may have gone to college. By studying thousands of student aptitude, interest, and ability patterns, and finding out the person's later activities and occupations, we will learn a great deal. This will help students by predicting more precisely what kinds of aptitudes and abilities, what kinds of courses, and what kinds of interests constitute the best basis for various kinds of careers. An artist needs good color sense, a scientist needs mathematical ability, but counselors and teachers know that many other factors enter into the qualifications for success in a career. Motivation is a necessary ingredient, but the best use of the student's special talents requires that he identify this talent early and obtain the education essential for the full development and effective use of his powers.

It is anticipated that "Project Talent" will make a significant contribution toward meeting this need: better prediction, based on actual follow-ups, of a young person's chances for success in a given field. To some extent, this can be done today, and it has been an enormous incentive to teachers, young people, and parents to be told, for example, "This boy unquestionably has talent in a given direction. If he can continue his education, he may reasonably expect to master his chosen trade or profession."

• *A Better Understanding of How Young People Choose Their Life Work.* Many people follow their family trade or profession. They tend to think that people know quite early what their life work will be. Other people drift into an occupation and they tend to think that everyone else more or less drifts into a particular trade, business, or profession. Many people feel that they have very little choice.

However, many people today do have a choice, and the diversity of occupations and the need for special training continue to increase. We have begun to learn something about the processes by which a young person decides that he would like to be a teacher, a lawyer, or an apprentice for a trade. This study and others can help us understand at what ages certain lifetime careers tend to be chosen.

Naturally, high school seniors talk more about their future careers than do high school freshmen. Yet there are many indications that even younger children already have interests which are related to the fields in which they later work.

• *A Better Understanding of the Educational Experiences Which Prepare Students for Their Life Work.* American education is noted for its diversity. Only through the analysis of detailed information about students, their educational experiences, and their subsequent successes or failures can we hope to make our educational system as flexible and responsive to the individual needs of its students as it must be if our nation is to continue to develop and prosper.

"Project Talent" has been carefully designed to fill an important national need for facts regarding the identification, development, and utilization of our human resources. This information is intended as a basis for manpower policies and as a basic resource for the many individuals responsible for the education of our children.